

Belchertown, Granby & Amherst SENTINEL

YOUR HOMETOWN NEWSPAPER SINCE 1915

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THURSDAY,
FEBRUARY 11, 2021

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An emergency pantry has been established by neighbors on Bay and Poole Road.

PHOTO BY MELINA BOURDEAU

Neighbors establish emergency pantry

MELINA BOURDEAU

Staff writer

BELCHERTOWN — With the motto of "Take what you need, give what you can," a group of neighbors has established a little free pantry to provide people with emergency food and toiletries.

Belchertown resident Jan Caswell said during the pandemic, her neighborhood worked to address food insecurity.

"We have great food pantries as well as Belchertown CAN in town, but sometimes when they're not as available, we want people to have this," she said.

Using recycled materials, a carpenter built the little pantry which has a shelf and houses donations including non-perishable food items as well as toiletries.

"There are a lot of good hard-working people that have been crushed by the pandemic," Caswell said. "We want to make sure they have food on their tables."

See PANTRY, page 8 •

GRANBY

BOS appoints new School Com member

School Com Chair steps down

MELINA BOURDEAU
Staff writer

GRANBY — To fill the vacancy left by former Granby School Committee Chair Emre Evren, the Selectboard appointed Jill Pelletier to the committee on Monday evening.

In mid-January, Evren announced he would be stepping down from the school committee effective at the end of the month.

The former Vice Chair Jennifer

Bartosz has now taken over as chair of the committee.

At its Feb. 2 meeting, the School Committee also announced the two people interested in filling the vacancy — Jill Pelletier and Rita Abbott.

Pelletier spoke to her ability to serve in the Monday, Feb. 8 joint meeting of the School Committee and Selectboard.

Pelletier said she credited her experience as a parent, an educator and a regular attendee in of the meeting made her a good candidate. She works as an Assisted Principal at Chestnut Hill Community School in

Belchertown.

"I've been regularly attending meetings and observing the process in Granby. My daughter is in the public schools. After observing what's going on, seeing my daughter taking part in personally in the schools, I feel like it offers a good mix of experiences to apply it to this," she said.

Pelletier was asked if she had "thick skin," by Granby Selectboard member Jennifer Silva who added that "in today's climate you're going to need it."

See GRANBY BOS page 3 •

COVID-19

Belchertown sees dip

Task force concerned about 'Super spreader Sunday'

MELINA BOURDEAU

Staff writer

BELCHERTOWN — While the COVID-19 cases in Belchertown are trending downward, bringing the town down to a yellow designation, the COVID-19 Task Force expressed the need for residents to remain vigilant.

There were 28 new confirmed cases from Sunday, Jan. 31 to Feb. 6, bringing the total COVID-19 cases to 630. There were no deaths during the last weekly period, maintain at 18 people who have succumbed to the virus.

There were 1,069 tests performed in the weekly period, bringing the number of tests on Belchertown residents to 23,882, as of Feb. 3.

According to the previous two-week period from Jan. 17 to Jan. 30, Belchertown has seen both lower case positivity rate and rate per 100,000.

The case positivity rate for the last two-week period was

4.5% and the previous week was 5.47%. The rate per 100,000 is down to 39.2 from last week's 45.8.

In the COVID-19 Task Force meeting, members of the Board of Health, Selectboard and School Committee were joined by Town Administrator Gary Brougham to discuss the pandemic.

School Committee Chair Heidi Gutekenst shared that Belchertown became yellow on Thursday Feb. 4, following an email from Quabbin Health Director Judy Metcalf.

"She was clear to point out that it was still relatively the same positivity rate, it was the same number of cases, just that more people were being tested. That lowered the rate which put us in yellow," Gutekenst said. "I still saw yellow and was incredibly happy, it means lots of things can start to go. We definitely need cautious optimism."

Agreeing, Board of Health member Hope Gardener said it shouldn't change anything in terms of people's behavior.

"It is really just a matter of the

See CURVE, page 8 •

BELCHERTOWN

Search Committee selections made

BOS appoints seven people to pick top fire chief candidates

MELINA BOURDEAU

Staff writer

BELCHERTOWN — Tasked with whittling down a pool of 12 applicants to three finalists, the Fire Chief Search Committee was appointed by the Selectboard on Monday.

The seven-person committee is composed of Belchertown Police Chief Chris Pronovost, Dept. of Public Works Director Steve Williams, Finance Committee Chair Ron Aponte, Jabish Brook Middle School Principal Thomas Ruscio, Ludlow Fire Chief Ryan Pease, School Committee Chair Heidi Gutenkenst and Belchertown resident Matt Jackson.

The need to hire a new chief arose following the announcement of long-time chief Edward Bock who announced his retirement in a letter to the Selectboard in December.

The Selectboard aims on sticking to the timeline proposed by Town Administrator Gary Brougham.

The search committee will meet to go through applications and begin the process of getting three finalists which will be brought to the Selectboard to make a final vote. In Dec., Brougham said the goal is to have a person appointed in April 2021 "so there could be some overlap between the outgoing and incoming chiefs."

Brougham commented in the meeting that there are candidates who are "quite impressive" in the pool of applicants.

See FIRE CHIEF page 4 •



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■ COMMUNITY

Belchertown man sentenced for Federal firearm offenses

STAFF REPORT

BOSTON – A former federal firearm licensee was sentenced today in federal court in Springfield for firearms charges.

Max T. Gaj, 30, of Belchertown, was sentenced by U.S. District Court Judge Mark D. Mastrianni to 18 months in prison and three years of supervised release. In September 2020, Gaj pleaded guilty to receipt and possession of unregistered firearms, receipt and possession of National Firearm Act firearms not identified by serial number, making a firearm in violation of the NFA, selling firearms in violation of state and local laws, and making false entries in, failing to make appropriate entries in, and failing to properly maintain records as required.

Gaj, who was a federal firearms licensee and part owner of Dark Horse Gunsmithing in South Hadley, received and possessed

three firearms: a machinegun, a machinegun bearing no serial number and a shotgun. The firearms were not registered to him in the National Firearms Registration and Transfer Record, as required by the NFA. Gaj also made a machinegun in violation of the NFA.

In addition, Gaj sold two firearms, a Glock Model 17 pistol and a Glock Model 43 pistol in violation of state law. Gaj also made false entries, failed to make appropriate entries and failed to properly maintain records as required of a federal firearms licensee.

United States Attorney Andrew E. Lelling and Kelly Brady, Special Agent in Charge of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, Boston Field Division made the announcement. Assistant U.S. Attorney Catherine G. Curley of Lelling's Springfield Branch Office prosecuted the case.

Belchertown Community Television schedule

BELCHERTOWN – This is the upcoming schedule for Thursday, Feb. 11 to Wednesday, Feb. 17. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, this schedule is subject to change.

Thursday, Feb. 11

- 8 a.m. – Feb. 8 Selectboard
- 10 a.m. – Feb. 8 Conservation Commission
- 12 p.m. – Feb. 9 Planning Board
- 7 p.m. – Feb. 8 Selectboard
- 9 p.m. – Feb. 8 Conservation Commission
- 11 p.m. – Feb. 9 Planning Board

Friday, Feb. 12

- 8 a.m. – Conversation with Pakman
- 9 a.m. – Feb. 9 School Committee
- 11 a.m. – Feb. 10 Cutchins Public Meeting
- 7 p.m. – Conversation with Pakman
- 8 p.m. – Feb. 9 School Committee
- 10 p.m. – Feb. 10 Cutchins Public Meeting

Saturday, Feb. 13

- 8 a.m. – Curious Giraffe
- 9 a.m. – Feb. 9 FinCom/Selectboard Meeting
- 11 a.m. – Feb. 10 Cutchins Public Meeting
- 7 p.m. – Feb. 9 FinCom/Selectboard Meeting

Sunday, Feb. 14

- 4:30 p.m. – St. Francis Roman Catholic Church
- 6 p.m. – Christ Community Church
- 7 p.m. – Hope United Methodist Church
- 8:30 p.m. – Feb. 10 Cutchins Public Meeting

Monday, Feb. 15

- 8 a.m. – Conversation with Pakman
- 5 p.m. – Conversation with Pakman
- 6:30 p.m. – Selectboard - Channel 191

Tuesday, Feb. 16

- 8 a.m. – Curious Giraffe
- 6:30 p.m. – FinCom/Selectboard – Channel 191

Wednesday, Feb. 17

- 8 a.m. – Conversation with Pakman
- 1 p.m. – Meditation with Lori - Stillness
- 5 p.m. – Conversation with Pakman
- 6:30 p.m. – FinCom/Selectboard – Channel 191

The BCTV Studio is located at 68 State St., Belchertown. BCTV channels are 191, 192 and 193. The BCTV schedule is available at www.Belchertown.org. On the main title page select "residents," click on Belchertown Community Television. Selected BCTV shows are also available on Vimeo. Go to www.Belchertown.org, go to quick links and click on "watch meetings and events online." The schedule is subject to change.

The BCTV weather information system is broadcast on TV channel 193 and displays the current weather conditions at the BCTV station as well as, the current regional radar. This service operates 24 hours a day with audio provided by the National Weather Service from Albany New York, with forecasts, storm and emergency warnings for the Pioneer Valley.

Clapp Memorial Library upcoming events

STAFF REPORT

BELCHERTOWN – The following are upcoming events at Clapp Memorial Library.

Virtual Author Visit - Elizabeth Bear

The Clapp Memorial Library's Science Fiction and Fantasy Book Club is excited to host local award-winning author Elizabeth Bear on Feb. 23 at 6 p.m. The group will be reading her book, Ancestral Night as the monthly pick, and be gathering at 5:30 to share its initial thoughts before joined by Bear.

To join or for further information please email Tegan at tmannino@cwmars.org

Teen Advisory Board meeting

The Clapp Memorial Library's Teen Advisory Board will meet virtually on Thursday, Feb. 25, from 7 to 8 p.m. The Teen Advisory Board is a group of seventh to 12th grade students who propose library programming for teens and provide input on teen services. To receive the link to join the meeting, teens must e-mail claplibrarytab@gmail.com to register. New members are welcome.

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■ COMMUNITY

Sen. Lesser hosts Dr. Kathleen Szegda on livestream

STAFF REPORT

VIRTUAL – Senator Eric P. Lesser was joined by epidemiologist Dr. Kathleen Szegda, director of Community Research and Evaluation at the Public Health Institute of Western Massachusetts for a Lunchtime Livestream on public health equity, vaccine distribution, and their COVID-19 dashboard.

For over 20 years, Szegda has worked and advocated for public health issues on the local, state, and national level. The video from the livestream can be accessed on Facebook and Twitter.

In presenting PHI's COVID-19 dashboard, Szegda discussed how the presentation of the data was aimed at focusing on Western Mass in particular.

"Part of our effort is trying to think about what information we can get out to our communities in Western Mass that's relevant to Western Mass," she said. "It's hard, because we see a lot of state-level data, and it isn't reflective of what we're seeing here."

Some recent challenges that the region has faced with vaccine distribution include internet access and availability of transportation to mass vaccination sites such as the Eastfield Mall in Springfield.

"We need to make sure that our communities who don't have the resources to be online all day have access," Dr. Szegda



COURTESY PHOTO
Senator Lesser and Dr. Szegda discussing internet access issues when booking vaccine appointments

said. "The other piece, too, is thinking about who's in need of access—making sure that we have people who can speak in different languages, materials and information available in different languages. How can we make it more accessible to those communities who have been hit by COVID or are at high-risk?"

Szegda emphasized the need for a thoughtful approach on group criteria to

help speed up distribution rates, similar to what neighboring states have done.

"It's important that the intent was to get the vaccine to the people who were at risk, but it's a balance of doing that with a process that gets it out as quickly as possible to those in need," said Szegda.

You can find out more about PHI's COVID-19 dashboard by visiting their website.

Belchertown nomination papers available

STAFF REPORT

BELCHERTOWN – Nomination papers for the May, 17 Town Election are available now at the Town Clerk's office. The Town Hall remains closed to the public due to COVID-19.

For those interested in running this year, please call 413-323-0281 and staff at the Town Clerk's office can email or mail a Candidate Statement form. The statement must be completed and either mailed, emailed or left in the drop box at Town Hall. Your nomination papers will be mailed to you.

The last day to take out nomination papers is Friday, March 26. The last day to submit nomination papers is Monday, March 29. People in hopes of getting on the ballot will need to obtain 50 Belchertown registered voter signatures – but candidates are encouraged to get more than 50. The offices up for election/re-election are Board of Assessors, Board of Health, Housing Authority, Planning Board, School Committee, Selectman and Town Clerk.

Kindergarten registration opening

BELCHERTOWN – If you are a Belchertown resident, and have a child who will be 5 years of age on or before Sept. 1, 2021, you are encouraged to complete a kindergarten registration packet for the upcoming 2021-2022 school year beginning Friday, March 5 through Friday, April 9.

The registration packet link is located on the left-hand side of the Cold Spring School website: www.belchertownps.org/css. Packets will also be available at the front entrance of Cold Spring School in the bin marked kindergarten registration packets. For drop-off convenience, place all registration materials in a sealed envelope in the drop box located to the right of the main entrance of Cold Spring School or if preferred, you may mail your

packet to Cold Spring School, 57 South Main St., Belchertown, MA 01007.

In addition to the required registration packet, you will be asked to provide: the student's certified birth certificate with raised seal, a copy of immunization records (including lead screening), and a current physical (within one year). You will also need to provide two proofs of Belchertown residency: one in the form of a mortgage statement or rental/lease agreement and the second proof in the form of a utility bill (heating, electricity or phone) at the address listed on the registration form.

Please call the CSS main office at 413-323-0428 Monday through Friday between the hours of 7:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. with any questions or concerns.

GRANBY BOS • from page 1

"I think given my role currently in education, being an administrator, you have to," she said. "I also think that keeping in mind what your ultimate focus is when you're looking to support students, and understanding that perspective, the collective whole, is hopefully everyone's goal."

Selectboard member Jay Joyce said he favored Pelletier based on her experience.

"To find her so qualified, for the past 16 years she worked in public schools as a special educator and an administrator. I think the school community would be lucky to have someone (like this) on board at this time," he said. "Both the school committee and Jill can feel each other to see if she wants to run in the future."

Abbott was not present in the meeting, and members, including Bartosz attempted to reach out to her.

School Committee member Audrey Siudak suggested the Selectboard take a vote that evening, citing the limited time the committee had between its next meeting – where members are expected to vote during an executive session.

"To me this is pretty telling. This is important. If you were really interested then you knew last week's meeting got cancelled, you'd want to make sure you knew when the next one was," she said.

Pelletier will serve until the spring town election in May, when she would need to run for reelection if she so choose.

At its Jan. 19 meeting, Evren told the committee he would be stepping down.

"We talk about the commitment every school committee member makes to this work. I know for a fact that every member came with a lot of passion, a lot of interest in public education and to bring some change to our school district," he said. "I was lucky enough to get on this committee close to nine years ago and I learned a lot from all of you. I learned from the people in the school district and the school community."

Evren said due to an increase of demands in his professional and personal life, he would be stepping down at the end of January.

"I am happy the way this school committee found a way to sit down put its collective head together and find solution to things. That passion and commitment also means a time commitment, it means making sure they are delivered," he said. "Many of you know I've been talking about my load getting a little heavier outside of the school committee this year and the weight of my personal and professional commitment is getting heavy. I need to focus on those, and I am concerned I will not be able to devote the time that I always love to devote for the school related activities."

He thanked the committee members, past and present.

"I am lucky to have shared some meetings with you," he said. "I want to thank everyone in the community for your feedback, for your encouragement, for your own passion for the public schools and for your support for so many years."

Voices from the Incarcerated Veterans Oral History Project

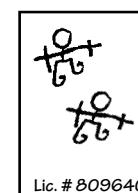
HOLYOKE – On Wednesday Feb. 17 at 2 p.m., Wistariahurst will host Voices from the Incarcerated Veterans Oral History Project, a virtual program presented by Jason Higgins. Higgins will give a talk on his oral history project with U.S. military veterans in the criminal justice system. His work records and preserves the memories and experiences of veterans incarcerated from the wars in Vietnam, Iraq, and Afghanistan. The program is free and open to all, but space is limited and pre-registration is required.

This program is open to all members of the public, but has been specially designed to address the needs of area seniors, many of whom continue to be socially isolated as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The pro-

gram is supported through a Community Development Block Grant - COVID-19 Grant to address, prevent, and respond to the COVID-19 Pandemic that is administered through the Holyoke Office of Community Development and has been planned in consultation with the Holyoke Council on Aging. Additional support has been provided through NEH CARES Act funding granted by Mass Humanities.

To register for Voices from the Incarcerated Veterans Oral History Project, please visit www.Wistariahurst.org or contact Eileen Maginnis at the Holyoke Council on Aging at maginnise@holyoke.org. If you have an idea for a topic you'd like to be considered for a future Wistariahurst session, please contact info@wistariahurst.org.

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State Rep. Jake Oliveira seeks applicants for internship

LUDLOW — The Office of Representative Jake Oliveira is now accepting applications for the Summer House Internship Program. Due to COVID-19, the internship will be entirely remote.

Internships in the office are intended for current undergraduate, graduate, or law school students, and in some cases, high school students. The ideal applicants will either live or attend school in the district and have an interest in government or public policy. Interns will be responsible for researching bills and issues that pertain to the 7th Hampden District, assisting the Representative and his staff with constituent services, and performing various administrative duties.

These internships are a great opportunity for interested students to gain hands-on experience in the legislative process and help build a resume for future government employment.

Interested applicants should send a resume and cover letter to Matt Tibbitts at matt.tibbitts@mahouse.gov by March 1. Applications will be reviewed on a rolling basis.

FIRE CHIEF • from page 1

The Selectboard went through several iterations of the search committee before appointing the members.

The Selectboard first determined there should be seven members, narrowing down from 12 interested applicants.

Selectboard member Jim Barry said he wanted to stay true to the requested list of committee members from various backgrounds.

"I'd also remind us that we are attempting to be more diverse, we don't necessarily have to hire seven old white guys to do this," he said. "I made note of the fact that seven of the 12 are experienced fire fighters/EMS people already. I'm not sure I would choose those seven, I would think we need a diversity of people. I would say a few from that group."

He proposed including members of the school community as well as the town hall.

Brougham said he also believed the committee should be "balanced and



COURTESY PHOTO
The White Family
built a snowman
in Granby on
Feb. 2 during
their snow day.

diverse."

"You've got a great bunch of people to choose from," he said. Brougham would also serve on the board as an ex-officio member of the group.

Selectboard Chair Gail Gramarossa expressed interest in having a member of the committee have experience in domestic violence as well as addiction. Speaking Out About Addiction and Recovery Founder Jill Panto was an applicant but was not selected for the committee.

"I would like to make a strong case for Jill because so much of EMS these days encounters substance abuse, mental health, domestic violence and other issues that are part of responding to these calls," Gramarossa. "I feel strongly someone with knowledge on that who can gauge the sensitivity of a fire chief applicant to some of those issues. I feel that's important."

Advocating to keep a Jackson on the committee, Selectboard member Ed Boscher said he viewed the opioid epidemic was also faced by Provonost on a consistent basis.

"Chief Pronovost is super in touch

with (the opioid epidemic) every day, as is the chief in Ludlow," he said.

Selectboard member Jen Turner said she liked having a citizen on the board to "get feedback from a community member who has longstanding roots in the community."

Selectboard member Nick O'Connor proposed the final configuration of the group.

"I'm taking some of the comments into consideration on that list, there was diversity that was a strong desire here," O'Connor said.

Barry said he was "troubled" by having one candidate with fire experience, and Boscher said while "it was not ideal," he was comfortable with Pease's experience as a chief in a neighboring community.

Members expressed the difficulty in selecting only seven members, given the strong applicants.

"We have a good pool of folks who have various background, experiences and would bring various things to the table" Gramarossa said. "It's a big puzzle."



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EDUCATION**Belchertown seniors featured in Q and A****STAFF REPORT**

BELCHERTOWN – Beginning last week, Belchertown High School Principal Christine Vigneux has begun featuring a member of the Class of 2021 in a question and answer survey about their tenure in the school.

Each of the seniors featured decorated a cap sharing their future plans and they have also answered questions about their experiences at “the Nest,” the school community of Belchertown Public Schools.

These seniors will be featured in the Sentinel as well.

**Danae Weldon***What are your future plans?*

In the future, I want to graduate with my Bachelor's Degree and then study for my Masters. I would also like to move/work in Tennessee or Texas.

What is your favorite memory from the nest?

My favorite memory would be the spirit assemblies and getting to dress up with my best friend Kelly.

What advice do you have for our younger Orioles?

To our younger Orioles, cherish and enjoy every single moment you get together at BHS, you never know when it could all be taken away from you.

What is your proudest moment as an Oriole?

My proudest moment as an Oriole is working as hard as I did the last four years and accomplishing my goal of getting accepted to my dream school.

**Erin Lucas***What are your future plans?*

I plan to attend Clark University. Currently, I'm undecided, but I'm interested in the math/science field. I will also be playing for the women's soccer team and lacrosse team at Clark. I plan to graduate from Clark University with a master's degree.

What is your favorite memory from the nest?

My favorite memory at BHS is the spirit assembly that was held last year. I participated in the three point knock-out, and I won! My whole grade rushed out on the basketball court to surround me. That will forever be my favorite memory.

What advice do you have for our younger Orioles?

Participate in sports, clubs, choir, band, etc. It will help manage your time better, help you stay active, and you can meet new people. You don't have to be a superstar to participate. You can do it!

What is your proudest moment as an Oriole?

My proudest moment is maintaining a higher GPA during my junior year than my freshman and sophomore years. I pushed myself to study harder, and as a result my grades improved. Plus, they say junior year is the hardest year of high school.

**Makenzie Smith***What are your future plans?*

I am going to be getting my bachelors in Biology at Western New England to later move on to a masters in Genetic Counseling.

What is your favorite memory from the nest?

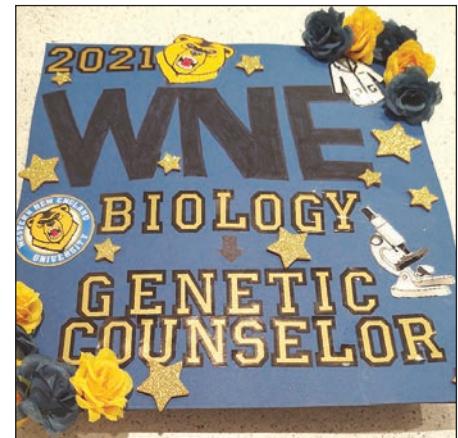
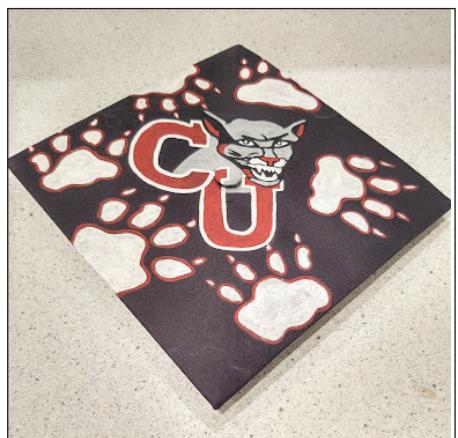
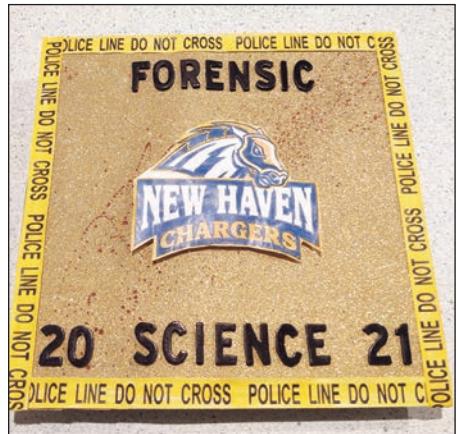
I loved showing the new students around during their orientation and answering questions. I was so excited to be a resource for them to make them feel more comfortable.

What advice do you have for our younger Orioles?

Don't be afraid to put yourself out there, get involved in as much as you can and don't worry about what other people think. Just do what makes you happy and don't rush it. The four years really do go by fast!

What is your proudest moment as an Oriole?

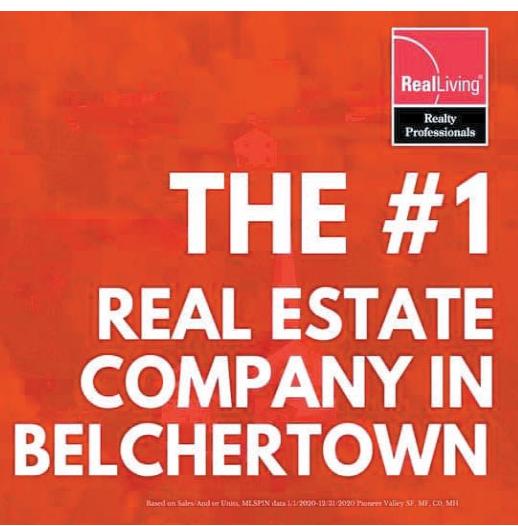
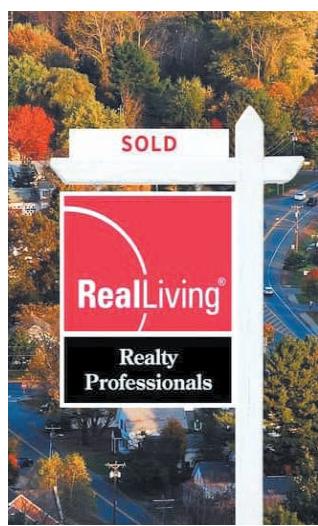
I am so proud to have maintained honors and/or high honors all throughout my time here!

**February break meals**

BELCHERTOWN – There is no meal service through Belchertown Public Schools next week during the Feb. break. But people can go to <https://www.project-bread.org/get-help> to find free meals for children.



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OPINION

Fresh flower care and flowers for free

With St. Valentine's Day coming up this Sunday, my thoughts turn to flowers and chocolate. Flowers because I am who I am, and chocolate, because I am surely hoping hubby will provide ample quantities in a heart-shaped box! Anyway, back to the flowers.

Many folks will be graced with a bouquet of cut flowers in honor of this special holiday, and I have some tips up my sleeve to make sure you get longevity out of your gift. No matter how your flowers make it home, either in a sleeve or in a box, chances are they've been out of water for some time. Once stems start to seal up, water and nutrients won't be able to flow and their lifespan could be cut short. Therefore, the first thing you ought to do is recut them. Your goal is to have a clean cut, one that won't crush the flower's vascular system.

In fact, I've never understood advice that mentions smashing floral stems; don't do it! Use bypass clippers, or if you're comfortable, a sharp knife. Household scissors usually aren't sharp enough, since they are geared more for cutting paper or fabric. Most advice books recommend making your cut on a 45 degree angle to expose the most surface area possible to water. Another trick is to cut the flower stems under water—this process will prevent air bubbles from clogging the stems. I usually fill a clean sink or bucket, submerge the flower stems and cut 1 or 2" off the bottom. If you've ever had a rose with a bent head, that is an air bubble at work. Try re-cutting the stem under water and hopefully the bubble will be forced out.

As you move your flowers into a vase (make sure it's clean!), remove any leaves that you estimate will be under the water line. Waterlogged leaves will rot and make bacteria that can clog stems, shorten vase life and make quite a stench! Some flowers do better if most of their foliage is removed, the reason being that the leaves draw water away from the main stem, and therefore away from the flower head. I generally snip off all the leaves of lilac, and remove all but the uppermost leaves of hydrangeas and zinnias. Usually a small packet of floral preservative is included along with your flowers. Using this in your vase of water will feed the blooms and encourage them to open to their fullest, vivid-color potential!

This year, Valentine's Day coincides with the start of February vacation. Why not snip some branches of your favorite spring shrubs for a neat experiment with the kids? Just think, when the bought flowers are long gone, you'll have some others waiting in the wings. The most common shrub to force in the vase is the forsythia; it can be done as early as late January or February, and right up until regular, outdoor bloom time.

Cut the branches on a day that temperatures are above freezing. The best for forcing are those that have many swollen buds. Bring them indoors and recut the stems just as you did for your cut flowers: under water and with a diagonal cut. The branches can then be put in a container or vase with a few inches of water in it.

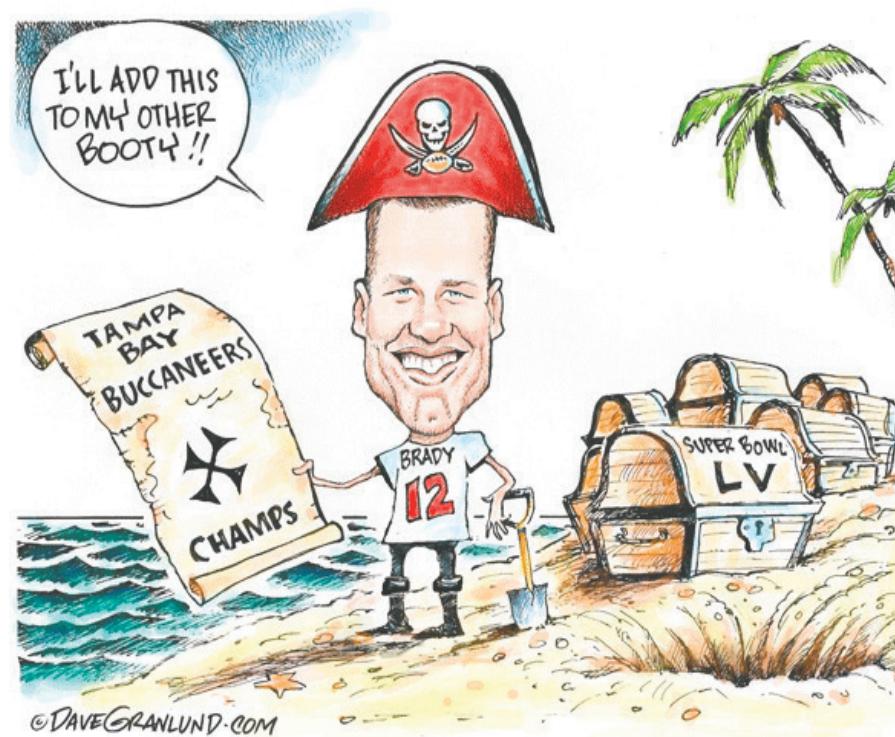
I usually steer away from using floral preservative on flowering shrubs. Any side branches or buds that fall below the water line should be removed. Change the water every few days to prevent bacteria growth. If kept in a warm room, buds should break within a few weeks. Many other of our favorite spring-blooming trees and shrubs can also be forced into bloom. Try the same approach with redbud, honeysuckle, crabapple, magnolia and flowering almond, cherry and plum.

Roberta McQuaid graduated from the Stockbridge School of Agriculture at the University of Massachusetts. For the last 28 years, she has held the position of staff horticulturalist at Old Sturbridge Village. She enjoys growing food as well as flowers. Have a question for her? Email it to ekennedy@turley.com with "Gardening Question" in the subject line.

IN THE GARDEN



Roberta McQuaid

**LETTER**

Enjoy the outdoors during the winter

To the Editor,

I greatly enjoyed reading the guest column by Julie Midura about hiking in the White Mountains in winter. But you don't need to be as adventurous as Julie and her husband to enjoy the outdoors in winter.

As a pediatrician I see so many patients, bored and overweight, sitting inside for their online classes, then playing video games and watching TV the rest of the day. Sports are mostly cancelled. They can not safely see friends. Yet an antidote to boredom and loneliness is waiting right outside. We are blessed to be live in an area with so much natural beauty. There are trails of

every length and difficulty.

They are accessible all the time, if one properly dresses for the weather. And they can see their friends too, if they wear their masks and socially distance.

So thank you again, Julie for your fascinating column. I'd love to join you some day. By the way, a mountaineer friend of mine says you can avoid snow and ice clumps on your micro spikes by wearing crampons with snow plates. They're available at EMS in Hadley, where they've been having a big sale.

Stay safe and healthy,

David Gottsegen, MD

Baby it's cold outside (especially at 4,0003 feet)!

JULIE MIDURA
Correspondent

Last week, Tom and I braced ourselves as we stepped out of our car at Rocky Branch Trailhead to hike to the summit of 4,003-foot Mt. Isolation. The temperature on our car thermometer read negative 2 degrees!

We strapped on our snowshoes as fast as we could, slung our heavy winter backpacks over our shoulders, grabbed our trekking poles, and headed up the trail as fast as our legs could carry us. We had just one thing in mind — move quickly in an attempt to generate heat.

When Tom and I first learned about the list of 48 4,000-foot mountains in New Hampshire, we envisioned hiking on balmy summer days under bright sunny skies while our boots struck the dirt and rock-strewn path beneath our feet. But somewhere along the way, we fell in love with hiking so much — or maybe we just lost all sense of self-preservation — that we decided to continue climbing the mountains right through winter. Although we did extensive research beforehand on how to be safe while hiking up such big mountains on frigid winter days, much of what we learned came through trial and error.

One of the first lessons we learned was to dress in layers. A single heavy winter jacket is a poor choice for winter hiking. Dressing in layers gives you the ability to regulate your body temperature in order to avoid becoming too hot or too cold for extended periods of time. Multiple layers allow you to add and remove clothing as needed.

The key to layering in deep cold is to understand that air temperature, body temperature and exertion level all work together to determine how cold you will feel. You should remove as many layers as necessary on the ascent to minimize perspiring.

Zero degrees can feel brutally cold or



COURTESY PHOTO

Tom and Julie Midura celebrating on Mt. Isolation — their 36th mountain of the NH48.

downright balmy depending on how you're dressed and how much you are exerting yourself. I have been very comfortable in a single, long-sleeve base layer while hiking up a steep incline, while, conversely, I have felt incredibly cold wearing four layers of clothing while standing still on a summit.

A good layering system includes one or two base layers made of wicking fabrics such as polyester, silk or wool; an insulating mid-layer, such as fleece or down; and a wind/waterproof outer layer that not only sheds moisture, but also allows water vapor to escape. Look for garments that have multiple venting options so that you can dump heat as your heart rate goes up during exertion. For most hikers, pit zips

See **HIKING**, page 7.

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SENTINEL
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HIKING • from page 6

are nonnegotiable.

Although options abound for each of the layers, one thing remains constant: avoid cotton at all costs. As most experienced hikers know, "cotton kills."

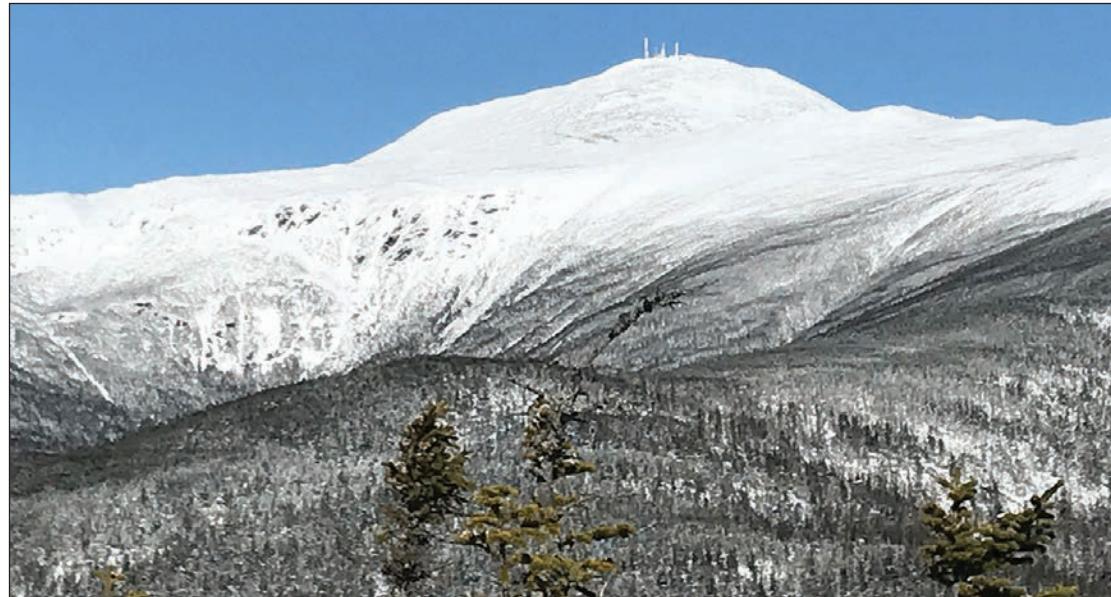
No, that isn't a typo. Or hyperbole. Those comfortable cotton T-shirts that I love to wear in summer could actually be the reason for my demise in winter. Let me explain.

Clothing keeps you warm by trapping warm air near your skin. When cotton gets wet, either from rain, snow or perspiration, it will no longer insulate you because the air pockets in the fabric absorb water like a sponge. Since cotton retains moisture and takes forever to dry, it pulls heat away from your body. Add cold temperatures to the equation and you are at a high risk of suffering from hypothermia.

When Tom and I first started hiking in winter, we heard the mantra, "Be Bold... Start Cold." That means when you arrive at the trailhead and step out of your car, you should feel quite chilled. Within 10 to 15 minutes of hiking, you will generate enough heat to feel warm and comfortable.

Back then, I was fully aware of that recommendation, but I chose to ignore it, due mostly from the cold, hard fact that I despise being cold. When I stepped out of the warm car and into the frigid mountain air at the trailhead, I wanted an arsenal of clothing covering every inch of my body. No way was I taking off any layers! So I loosened the straps on my backpack to accommodate all of the layers that I was wearing and headed up the trail looking like Ralph's little brother in "A Christmas Story."

And of course, 15 minutes later, I felt like a was walking in a sauna. So off came the backpack and off came the layers. It took many, many... dare I say many... hikes before I finally learned my



The view of Mt. Washington, as seen from Mt Isolation.

COURTESY PHOTOS

lesson. Now, I suck it up and start cold.

I do, however, carry in my pack enough layers for a day on Everest. My typical winter layering system consists of a long sleeve merino wool quarter-zip top, a synthetic vest, a mid-weight fleece jacket, a goose down hooded puffy, and a hard shell (keep in mind that you may need to buy a size up for the outermost layer, since it will need to accommodate all of the layers underneath).

Lower layers and headgear

The layers for my lower half include fleece leggings, a thermal hiking skirt, waterproof pants, merino wool knee socks, gaiters, and 400-gram insulated boots.

For my head, I usually wear a Buff on the ascent and switch to a hat on the summit. Since my hands are always cold, I carry liner gloves, boiled wool mittens, fleece mittens, and waterproof over-mitts. I always carry hand, toe and foot warmers, as well as an extra pair of thick wool mountaineering socks and an extra hat.

Tom and I are willing to carry so many layers because we are well aware that if things go south – and I'm not referring to



Almost there! Julie and Tom Midura close in on the summit of 4,003-foot Mt. Isolation.

our direction of travel – we will survive with our hands and feet intact. Just three weeks ago, on a brutally cold and windy day in January, two hikers required a Blackhawk helicopter rescue from the flanks of Mt. Lafayette

in N.H. The pair lost the trail in the deep snow. They were wearing trail runners on their feet, and one of them lost his shoes and waded barefoot through several feet of snow until he could no longer go on.

I shudder to think of how terrifying and excruciatingly painful that must have been.

Reading about rescues such as this one is the reason why we carry so much gear during winter. Being prepared for whatever conditions we may encounter is essential. The alternative is unthinkable.

As we hiked over six and-a-half miles in snowshoes to reach the summit of our 36th winter peak last week, we weren't worried about the cold. We had all of the layers we needed... and then some. Whenever we stopped for a break, we kept our respite brief to avoid becoming too chilled. The only layers we needed to add and remove on the ascent were our heavier mittens.

When we took our final steps up the steep, snowy trail onto the summit cone five hours from the time we started, we were greeted to something we rarely experience on a mountaintop, especially in winter — no wind.

The sun was shining and the temps were in the mid-teens. We each added one more layer, then sat down and spent the next hour eating lunch, sipping hot cocoa, and inhaling the beauty of the snow-capped peaks all around us.

As we gazed in absolute awe at the prominent mass of 6,288-foot Mt. Washington – the tallest mountain in New England – my heart skipped a beat. The "Rock Pile" is one of the 12 remaining peaks we have left to climb in winter. It is a mountain that commands respect, as is evidenced by the long list of lives that have been lost there. But we will wait for another perfect weather day before attempting to reach her summit.

We've made poor choices in the past. We've hiked up mountains in conditions that were telling us to turn back. We won't tempt fate again. We won't take unnecessary risks. We want to live to hike another day, and as we all know... the mountain isn't going anywhere.

Peace, and hike on!



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CURVE • from page 1

rating by the state and the number per 100,000 population," she said.

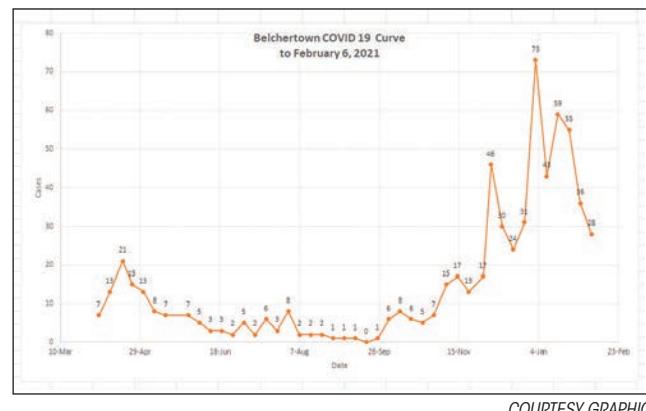
She added that the most difficult part of the choices the board have to make, for example closing the Chestnut Hill pool.

"Somebody's always going to be upset by these decisions, it's not surprising. It's an incredibly difficult, challenging stressful time," she said. "But there's a need for an abundance of caution and that means that things get taken away and that means that this challenging, stressful time gets even more challenging and stressful."

While there is positive news about the yellow designation and a potential ease in some restrictions, the group agreed there needed to be caution.

Guardenier said there would be high likelihood that the COVID-19 numbers would go up due to Super Bowl related gatherings and the group would see it within the week.

Board of Health member Colleen



COURTESY GRAPHIC

Duroshea called it "Super spreader Sunday."

"I think we all know we went red as a town after the holidays...people got together inside with families and case numbers went up. That's just a fact, across the state, across the country," Guardenier said. "It's no surprise why we were red for the last few weeks...We want to make we're not getting together inside with people unmasked. It's not safe – even if it's your family and friends and you love them, it doesn't mean you can't get COVID from them. it doesn't mean our numbers won't go back up again."

PANTRY • from page 1

Caswell said the group checked with the Quabbin Health District about donations.

The group cannot accept donations of any items made of glass, anything opened or damaged, expired or homemade. No medications can be accepted either.

The lists of suggested items is included on the door of the little pantry, where donated items can be dropped off.

The pantry will be checked on a regular basis for donations or to restock items.

Caswell expressed hope that more neighborhoods will create their own little free pantries.

"We have someone who has parts if someone is really serious to make one," she said. "We would love to see people duplicate this. Doing something for your community really feels good."

Caswell can be reached with questions or donations about the little free pantry at mtnwomen@charter.net or 413-323-4418.



PHOTO BY MELINA BOURDEAU

Attached to the little free pantry is a suggested list of food donations. People are being told not to include any items made of glass.

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■ GRANBY

Gong Hei Fat Choy! Happy Chinese New Year!

Upcoming events at the Granby library

GRANBY – Get ready for Chinese New year, “the year of the rat,” which begins on Feb. 12, with the dragon puppet take and make bag at the Granby Library. Ask for picture books about Chinese New Year too!

Curbside pickup make and take bags go fast, so it is advised that you reserve a bag before coming to pick one up in the library lobby during open hours. Call the library during open hours to reserve a bag at 413-467-3320. Library hours are from Tuesday through Friday from 10:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

Granby Library's February school vacation week Feb. 16 to 19

Elephant and Piggie Friendiversary Fun

Sign up for “Friendiversary” fun pack & ask to borrow some Elephants and Piggie books too! Call the library during open hours to sign up.

Your fun pack will include an Elephant and Piggie goodie, activity sheets and a raffle ticket for an Elephant and Piggie Biggie book and cut outs.

If you sign up, your pack will be in the library lobby for curbside pickup this week, with your child’s first name



Granby library celebrates the Chinese New Year, which begins Feb. 12. COURTESY PHOTO

and last initial on it.

Do you want to build a snow castle?

Stop by the Library Lobby this week for a Marshmallow Building Bag.

Have fun creating a castle with

marshmallows and toothpicks.

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Granby Lions Club host ‘Groundhog Fuel Assistance Fund’

GRANBY – Once again this winter heating season, the Granby Lions Club has established an emergency fuel assistance fund for Granby residents. This fund, titled the “Groundhog Fund,” will enable residents of Granby to obtain needed assistance for fuel to help them through the next six weeks of winter.

The Lions Club Groundhog Fund will begin helping residents on Feb. 2 and will continue until March 16.

Residents who would like to apply for needed assistance need to complete an application and these applications are available at the Dressel’s Service Station on Route 202 during their business hours of 7 a.m. to 4 p.m. from Monday through Friday.

The Granby Lions Club appreciates the continuing support that the community of Granby gives to their projects and activities.

Nancy Curtis Scholarship applications available

WARE – Applications are now available for the Nancy Curtis Scholarship in the Ware, Palmer, and Belchertown Public Schools Guidance Department. Deadline for completion of the application is April 5, and should be forwarded to Sandra Piechota, 269 Palmer Rd., Ware, MA 01082.



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Sunday Brunch 11:30am-2:30pm

◆ Donovan's Irish Pub

Eastfield Mall, 1655 Boston Road, Springfield, MA

413-543-0791

www.donovanspub.com

CURRENT HOURS: Thurs-Sat 11am-9pm;
Sun 9am-7pm; Sunday breakfast 9am - noon

◆ Venice Pizza & Grill

2341 Boston Road, The Wilbraham Shops
Wilbraham, MA

413-540-8080

www.venicepizzagrill.com

OPEN: Tues-Thurs 10:45am-9:30pm
Fri & Sat 10:45am -10pm; Sun 11am-9pm
Closed Monday

BUSINESS

New aid available to help small businesses

STAFF REPORT

SPRINGFIELD—Wells Fargo has announced that Common Capital, a Community Development Financial Institution, has received \$500,000 from its Open for Business Fund to help underserved area small businesses impacted by the economic struggles caused by COVID-19. The funding will aid the CDFI's ongoing recovery efforts including micro-lending activities, one-on-one coaching, digital marketing training and effective adaption to a COVID economy. This investment brings Wells Fargo's relief aid to Massachusetts small businesses and non-profits to over \$4.5 million since the pandemic began.

"This grant supports our ability to provide low-cost loans to businesses that face

barriers to growth and success, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. We are very grateful for the generous support of Wells Fargo; their funding will help our region's businesses to be resilient in this challenging environment and will have a long-term, positive impact on our local economy," said Raymond Lanza-Weil, President of Common Capital.

Common Capital will use the Wells Fargo grant to expand its existing flexible lending initiative in collaboration with the City of Springfield's Office of Planning and Economic Development. The Springfield Small Business Loan program offers lending capital, which can be partially forgiven, to small businesses seeking to recover and adapt to a COVID-19 economy. Common Capital will also use the Open for Business Fund grant to reduce

borrowing costs for historically underserved business owners.

"The City of Springfield and Common Capital are collaborating to strengthen and revitalize the City's businesses and neighborhoods," said Timothy T. Sheehan, Springfield's Chief Development Officer. "We are excited that Common Capital's grant from Wells Fargo will augment the Springfield Small Business Loan Program."

Wells Fargo launched the Open for Business Fund in 2020 as an approximately \$400 million small business recovery effort across the U.S. to help entrepreneurs recover and rebuild. The initiative focuses on increasing access to capital, technical expertise and long-term resiliency programs. To date, Wells Fargo has already distributed more than \$84 million across

32 states to help entrepreneurs hard hit by COVID-19, which is enabling entrepreneurs to maintain roughly 50,000 jobs.

"Wells Fargo's Open for Business Fund is another avenue of support and enlists the expertise of our CDFI partners to urgently help diverse Western Massachusetts area entrepreneurs recover and preserve the jobs they provide in their communities," said Ben Leonard, senior vice president of Wells Fargo Commercial Banking. "The funding will provide much needed access to capital with increased equity in resources and technical assistance for local businesses who are the backbone of our local economies and neighborhoods."

Interested small business owners can visit the website at www.commoncapitalma.org to learn more about available services and apply for financial assistance.

CAIA Association promotes Ruth Carolan to Chief Operating Officer

AMHERST — The Chartered Alternative Investment Analyst Association, the professional body for the global alternative investment industry, announced longtime CAIA team member and Belchertown resident Ruth Carolan has been promoted to the position of Chief Operating Officer.

In this role, Carolan oversees the organization's finance, legal, information technology, and human resource functions, and will also play a key role in building the framework for CAIA to continue its expansion into new markets around the world.

She will continue to play a valuable role in advising CAIA's Board of Directors and CEO William Kelly and will hold a seat on

CAIA's recently established Diversity and Inclusion Board.

"Stepping into the role of COO is an exciting challenge, and one that I am looking forward to tackling as we move further into 2021 and beyond," said Carolan. "Having been a part of CAIA's steady growth for over a decade, I am incredibly excited and energized to have the opportunity to help lead our organization to its next phase of operational excellence."

"Ruth is the right person at the right time to provide the kind of guidance and leadership that our organization requires as it moves into its third decade amidst a period of incredible growth and massive disruption," said William J. Kelly, CEO of

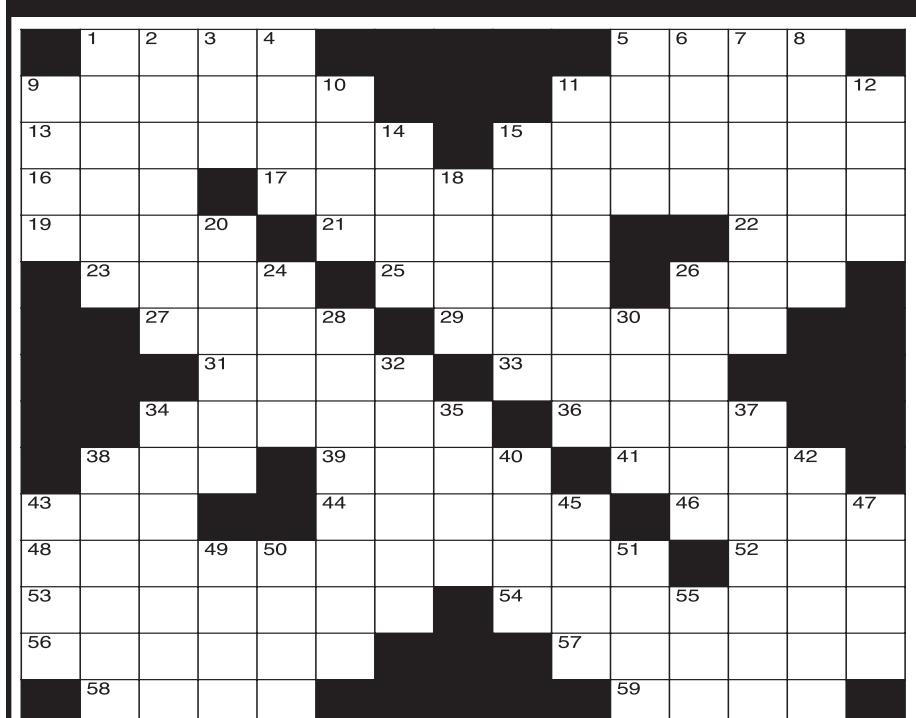
the CAIA Association. "The complexities of operating across so many borders bring both challenges and opportunities. Having a global COO, particularly one of Ruth's caliber, will allow us to identify new efficiencies and embrace the type of data-driven decision making that will help steer the continued growth of both our organization and our mission for many years to come."

This year marks CAIA's 20th anniversary, and in the past two years the organization has made major strides in adding to its team, to its offerings, and to its thought leadership position across the alternatives landscape.

"Just as we want to help educate the investment industry about the disruptive

potential of data science, we want to yield data intelligence ourselves as a powerful ally in managing and growing our business," added John Bowman, CFA, Senior Managing Director with CAIA. "Ruth's leadership as our new COO will be invaluable in leading the charge in terms of putting our data to work for our organization, our Members, our education-focused mission, and the overall betterment of the experience for the end investor."

Carolan joined CAIA in 2007 and most recently held the role of Managing Director of Global Operations. Prior to joining the organization, she held a number of senior roles in law and administration, mainly in the Washington, D.C. area.

**CLUES ACROSS**

- 1. Composed
- 5. Lesotho currency
- 9. Ethnic group associated with Hungarians
- 11. Gains knowledge of
- 13. Gradual destruction
- 15. Purchase
- 16. Pharaoh of lower Egypt
- 17. Where you're going
- 19. The 6th letter of the Greek alphabet
- 21. Fishing net
- 22. Midway between south and southeast
- 23. A way to sort
- 25. C C C
- 26. Popular sports podcast (abbr.)
- 27. Discount
- 29. Consumes tobacco
- 31. A way to run

CLUES DOWN

- 33. Popular musical awards show
- 34. Pertains to the male sexual organ
- 36. Supplements with difficulty
- 38. Green veggie
- 39. Deep-bodied freshwater fish
- 41. Holy fire
- 43. Usually has a lid
- 44. Being of use or service
- 46. Have a yen for
- 48. Unknowingness
- 52. Dry white wine drink
- 53. Unwinds
- 54. Traveling by sea
- 56. Outdoor entertaining areas
- 57. Stringed instruments
- 58. Redgrave, actress
- 59. Moves earth
- 26. Former monetary unit of Spain
- 28. Foodies
- 30. New Zealand parrot
- 32. Makes very happy
- 34. A payment required for not fulfilling a contract
- 35. Emerald Isle
- 37. The act of terminating someone's employment
- 38. Gland in some mammals
- 40. Commoner
- 42. Large animals
- 43. Belch
- 45. Employee stock ownership plan
- 47. Work units
- 49. Wagon
- 50. Nerve fiber
- 51. Proclaimed
- 55. Japanese delicacy

Share Some GOOD NEWS!

Birth Announcements

Welcome, Hayley Ryan!
• Born April 22, 2019
• 9 lbs. 22 inches
Proud Parents
Lydia & Mike Ryan

*Place your FREE Announcement in The Sentinel.
Photos Encouraged*

Baby's First Name: _____

Parents (names & hometown): _____

Siblings (names & hometown): _____

Maternal Grandparents (names & hometown): _____

Paternal Grandparents (names & hometown): _____

Birthdate: _____ Additional info: _____

To submit your announcement complete this form and send to **The Sentinel**, 24 Water St., Palmer, MA 01069. Or email: sentinel@turley.com

PUBLIC SAFETY

POLICE LOGS

Belchertown Police

Editor's note: The following are brief explanations of select entries in the Belchertown Police log and arrests for the weeks of Jan. 27 through Feb. 2. The information was provided by a member of the police department based on the review of the detailed log summary. This feature is designed to provide context and explanation to some of the calls police respond to every day. Of the 249 calls police responded to, there were eight incidents, seven accidents, three arrest/summons and two citations.

ARRESTS/SUMMONS

Saturday, Jan. 30

9:39 p.m. – Thomasz Karas, 40, of 10 Woodhaven Dr, Belchertown was arrested on charges of operating under the influence of alcohol, an open container of alcohol and a marked lanes violation.

Officers responded to a residence on North Washington St after a report there was a vehicle on the resident's front lawn playing loud music. The officer noticed the truck, but didn't observe the occupants, at first. The vehicle was running and loud music was playing. The officer approached the vehicle and observed the male operator laying across center console in the back with his head toward his legs. The officer didn't get a response from the man and called for an ambulance. Upon opening the door, the officer observed a female who was unresponsive, when the officer shook the woman, she was responsive. The officer observed two open glass beer bottles in the vehicle. The driver smelled like alcohol and a back up officer was called on scene. After the ambulance arrived on scene, it was determined the male party didn't need medical attention. A field sobriety test was administered and the man was later placed under arrest.

Sunday, Jan. 31

4:27 p.m. – Derek Boucher, 43, of 8 Jabish St, Belchertown was arrested on the charge of operating under the influence of alcohol.

Officers responded to the area of State St for a report of an erratic operator received from Granby Police Department from Rt 202 into Belchertown. The plate number was given to the officer in area of station, who headed toward Granby. The officer saw a vehicle fitting the description travelling north. The officer attempted caught up to the vehicle and activated their lights. The suspect had bloodshot and glassy eyes, but denied using drugs, however they avoided answering whether they consumed alcohol. Based upon the officer's observations, the person was arrested. The suspect was transported to the station for booking and was later released on personal reconnaissance.

ACCIDENTS/INCIDENTS

Wednesday, Jan. 27

2:46 p.m. – Officers responded to a two-vehicle accident on State and Front St. One vehicle was travelling south on State St. and stopped. A second vehicle failed to see the first stopped striking the vehicle from behind. No injuries were reported, but Belchertown Fire Dept. was contacted for fluids. The second vehicle was towed.

3 p.m. – Officers responded to an accident on Federal St. and Old Amherst Rd. A vehicle going east on Federal St. was unable to avoid contact as a second vehicle pulled out trying to make a left turn. The operator of the second vehicle said they were late for an appointment. Both vehicles were able to be driven from the scene.

7:40 p.m. – Officers took a report of a fraud. The reporting party got a phone call from someone believed to be their relative who was in an accident causing an injury to another party who needed money for legal fees. The reporting party notice their alleged relative didn't sound the same, and the caller said they broke their nose. The reporting party was then put on the phone with lawyers allegedly who began asking for cash. The reporting party was convinced by the scam, and bought six separate bitcoin transactions. The reporting party then called their relative who told them that they were scammed. The caller was advised to make contact with their bank and the information was forwarded to a detective for follow up.

Thursday, Jan. 28

2:55 p.m. – Officers responded to assist Belchertown fire and paramedics.

Friday, Jan. 29

7:18 a.m. – Officers responded to an accident on Federal St and Bay Rd. The operator of one vehicle thought a second vehicle was pulling into traffic. The first vehicle struck the first from behind.

8:21 p.m. – Officers responded with Belchertown Fire and paramedics to a residence where two dogs were fighting and their owner was trying to break the dogs free. The owner was injured in the process and treated.

9:46 p.m. – Officers responded to an accident on North Liberty St. An operator travelling south on North Liberty St struck a deer that ran into the southbound lane. The deer was struck on the passenger's front end. There was damage to the front end including the headlight. No tow was necessary and no injuries were reported.

Saturday, Jan. 30

8:41 p.m. – Officers responded to an accident Pelham Rd and Federal St. One vehicle travelling west on Federal St in area of Pelham Rd, when a vehicle travelling on Federal St attempted to turn right, hitting

a patch of ice. The second vehicle struck the first in the rear. No injuries were reported and both vehicles were able to be driven from the scene.

Monday, Feb. 1

6:46 a.m. – Officers responded to one vehicle accident on Mill Valley Rd. The vehicle struck a guard rail, crossing the yellow line. The vehicle was towed from the scene. No injuries were reported.

8:35 a.m. – Officers responded to an accident on Franklin St. A truck struck a pole on Franklin St. The vehicle was towed from the vehicle. No injuries were reported.

10:01 a.m. – Officers and Belchertown Fire and paramedics dispatched to a business for an industrial accident where lumber fell onto individual. They were transported from the scene.

1:19 p.m. – Officers took a report of unemployment fraud.

2:26 p.m. – Officers dispatched on a report of an elderly female who was missing for a few hours and no one knew of her whereabouts. The calling party were looking for her. The woman was entered as a missing person, safe return was called and a be on the look out was put out of the Western Mass. law communications network. The woman was found hours later. She was at the hospital.

Tuesday, Feb. 2

12:41 p.m. – A resident called reporting an instance of fraud. The person received notice that a purchase was made to a credit card from an overseas company. The caller discovered the unauthorized charges and was instructed to contact the credit card company. They were informed they still had some transaction fees. No other information is available at this time.

Granby Police

Editor's Note: The Granby Police Department responded to 111 calls for the week of Jan. 29 through Feb. 4. Those arrested are presumed innocent until proven guilty in a court of law. All information is provided by the Granby Police Department.

Monday, Feb. 1

9:32 a.m. – Officers investigated a motor vehicle accident on Kendall St. The operator drove off the roadway and struck a utility pole. No injuries were reported.

1:30 p.m. – Officers investigated motor vehicle accident at Amherst St and Easton St. The operator drove off the roadway and struck a guardrail. No injuries were reported.

Wednesday, Feb. 3

12:47 p.m. – Officers investigated a motor vehicle accident on Chicopee St. The operator drove off the roadway and caused damage. No injuries were reported.

DAs office states OUI cases could see new trials

STAFF REPORT

REGION – The Northwestern District Attorney's Office will this be mailing letters to approximately 3,100 people who were convicted of operating under the influence of alcohol between 2011 and 2018, notifying them that they may be entitled to seek a new trial based on unreliable breathalyzer results.

Breath test results in criminal cases between 2011 and 2018 were deemed inadmissible as the result of litigation in the Boston Municipal and District Court Departments, in which several criminal defendants challenged the reliability of the test results. After a lengthy evidentiary hearing, Judge Robert Brennan ruled in February 2017 that the breathalyzer machine in question (the Alcotest 9510) "oper-

ates in a manner that produces scientifically reliable blood alcohol content results [and that] the source code underlying the Alcotest 9510 breathalyzer device was developed and implemented in a manner that produces scientifically reliable BAC results."

However, Judge Brennan found that the annual calibration and certi-

See DA, page 16 •

OBITUARY

The Sentinel OBITUARY POLICY

Turley Publications offers two types of obituaries.

One is a free, brief **Death Notice** listing the name of deceased, date of death and funeral date and place.

The other is a **Paid Obituary**, costing \$120, which allows families to publish extended death notice information of their own choice and may include a photograph. **Death Notices & Paid Obituaries** should be submitted through a funeral home to: obits@turley.com.

Exceptions will be made only when the family provides a death certificate and must be pre-paid.

DEATH NOTICES

Adrianna EJ Campbell

Died Jan. 13, 2021

Celebration of Life to be held at later date.

Etta S. Hillman (DeGrace)

Died: Jan. 29, 2021

Services are private

Etta S. Hillman

SOUTH HADLEY- Etta S. (DeGrace) Hillman, 98, passed away Friday, Jan. 29, 2021.

Etta was born in Swansea on Oct. 10, 1922 to the late Isaac and Mary (Rego-Pavao) DeGrace.

Her greatest joy was raising and nurturing her family. Etta was the founder of the Meridan CT Scholarship Fund for high school students. She was a member of the Trinity United Methodist Church in Springfield. When she lived in Monson she was active with the Hearts Willing Women's Group at First Church of Monson, Congregational.

Etta was predeceased by her husband, John VeraCruz Hillman and a daughter Nan Pascoal. She leaves her children, Beverly A. Ratte and her husband Lawrence of Belchertown, Sheila H. Womble of Belchertown, John W. Hillman of New Britain, CT; a brother, Antone Gonsalves of Bedford; a sister, Rose Marie Dolphin of Asonet; thirteen grandchildren and 16 great grandchildren.

All funeral services are private and have been entrusted to Lombard Funeral Home of Monson.

Community resources for women series: *Safe Passage*

REGION – You may have heard about the popular Hot Chocolate Run fundraiser or maybe their Say Something campaign to help prevent domestic and sexual violence, but what is Safe Passage? How does it support women in our community? How has it been impacted by the pandemic?

To learn the answer to these and other questions about Safe Passage, join a Zoom presentation with the Zonta Club of the Northampton area on Thursday, Feb. 18, at 6:30 p.m. Safe Passage's Outreach coordinator and a counselor/advocate will bring us up to date on the organization's activities both before and during the pandemic.

The presentation will be followed by a question and answer period, facilitated by Judith Luddy, president of the local Zonta club.

Please register for the presentation by emailing Northampton@zontadistrict1.org; you will receive a link to join the no-cost event. Specific questions about Safe Passage may be sent ahead through the Zonta website, and participants are encouraged to review Safe Passage's website before the program.

"There is much concern about the potential for increased domestic violence and child abuse during these dark days. We know that Safe Passage will have a lot to say about their work, some suggestions about how we can be more aware, and possibly even be helpful," says Seren Derin of Amherst, vice-president of the Northampton Zonta Club.

Learn more about what's going on with Zonta at Northampton.ZontaDistrict.org.



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SPORTS

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Sedlacek headed for Nazareth College

TIM PETERSON
Sports Correspondent

BELCHERTOWN—After having his junior season cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Belchertown senior Owen Sedlacek is looking forward to the high school lacrosse season beginning at the end of April. He will also be playing his favorite sport at the collegiate level next year.

"I've always dreamed about playing lacrosse in college and I've been working very hard during the past ten years to achieve my goal," said Sedlacek during a recent zoom interview. "I'm going to be playing college lacrosse for one of the top Division 3 organizations. It just feels awesome."

Sedlacek, who's an attackman, will be playing his first college

lacrosse match for the Golden Flyers of Nazareth College, which is in Rochester, N.Y., in March of 2022.

"I first heard about Nazareth College when their coaches watched me play at a couple of my lacrosse tournaments during the summer," Sedlacek said. "I have a couple of friends who are going to be playing lacrosse there as well. It was definitely my top college choice because of the academics and the lacrosse program."

Sedlacek is planning to be a Political Science major at Nazareth College. His minor will be media/communications.

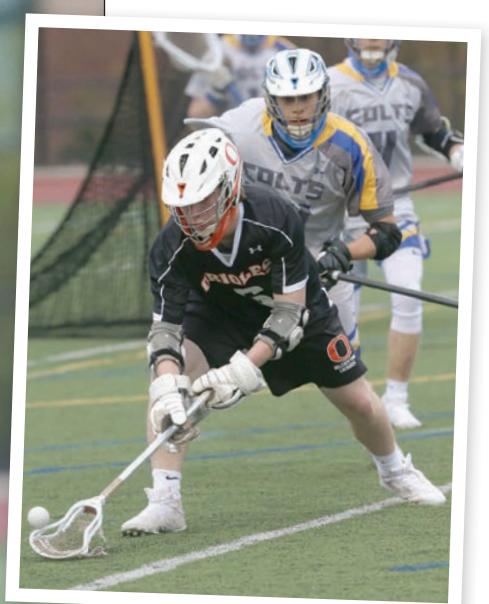
The Golden Flyers have made a total of 19 appearances in the NCAA Division 3 Tournament. They captured the NCAA championship title in 1992, 1996, and in 1997. Rob Randall is the men's lax coach at Nazareth College.



Owen Sedlacek has decided to attend Nazareth College to play lacrosse.



The senior is hoping to have one final season after losing last season to the pandemic.



PHOTOS BY DAVID HENRY
WWW.SWEETDOGPHTOS.COM
Sedlacek in action against Chicopee Comprehensive two years.

"It would be awesome to have the opportunity to compete for a National title," Sedlacek said. "It's something that they've done before and I'm hoping that they can do it again while I'm a member of the team. Coach Randall is also a great lacrosse coach and I've been coached by a couple of his assistants at the different lacrosse camps that I've attended."

While most high school recruits weren't able to visit college campus because of COVID-19, Sedlacek was able to tour Nazareth College, which is a private college.

See SEDLACEK, page 13 •

RACING

Challenge Cup set to finally debut

REGION — After a one-year delay, The New England Late Model Challenge Cup (NELMCC) is finally debuting in 2021 — and it will be even bigger than originally planned. American-Canadian Tour (ACT) officials confirmed today that nine tracks have signed up for the first season of the series that will pit weekly Late Model racers from across the region in a summer-long battle for pride, glory, and some serious prize money.

The inaugural Challenge Cup was originally slated for the 2020

season before being pushed back a year due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The basic format remains the same, with registered drivers taking their 10 best eligible finishes at participating tracks towards the season-long point standings.

However, the scope of the program has grown tremendously during the one-year hiatus. Nine tracks from four New England states have signed up, nearly double the amount that were originally registered for 2020.

The increase in tracks also means an increase in the sea-

son-ending awards. A guaranteed minimum point fund of \$14,000 has been posted for the Challenge Cup. The \$100 registration fee for each driver will also be added to the point fund in full. For example, if 40 drivers sign up for the series, another \$4,000 would be added to the point fund for a total of \$18,000.

Should registration be on pace with the 2020 pre-pandemic numbers, the total point fund could exceed \$20,000. A minimum prize

See RACING, page 13 •



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Alan Ward is one racer who will be trying to compete in the Late Model Challenge Cup this year.

MIAA

Football season vote reconsidered

GREGORY A. SCIBELLI
gscibelli@turley.com

REGION — The actual composition of the high school football season is back up in the air after the Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association voted to reconsider its decision on a format for the 2021-2022 season.

Just a few weeks after agreeing on a format that would be used this fall, the MIAA Board of Directors backtracked on the vote, voting overwhelming in favor in a special meeting last Thursday morning to reconsider its decision.

This fall is set to be the first under the new statewide tournament format that was voted into effect in early 2020. Unfortunately, Western Massachusetts schools did not have the opportunity to have one final sectional tournament

before the new tournament format takes effect.

The original vote was to have a nine-week season beginning Labor Day weekend and going to the first week of November. There would then be eight qualifying teams per Division to participate in a statewide tournament. There are currently scheduled to be eight divisions in high school football though their exact composition has not been determined. Most other high school sports will be divided into five divisions in order to level the competition throughout the state.

One other proposal presented a few weeks back was to have an eight-week qualifying campaign, much similar to the existing format. The only difference being the fact the

See MIAA, page 13 •

■ SPORTS

Full slate of Mass Golf championships return

NORTON — Mass Golf is excited to announce the return of a full schedule for Championships and Women's Championships during the 2021 season. While Mass Golf was able to conduct a majority of its events and qualifiers in 2020, this year's slate will also include the return of events canceled last year due to COVID-19, such as the Massachusetts Open.

According to Kevin Eldridge, Mass Golf's Director of Rules and Competitions, about 60 championship events, including 18-hole qualifying rounds, are being scheduled, and they will take place at 63 different Mass Golf Member Clubs. In total, more than 4,600 registrations are expected. "This year's lineup of championship events and qualifiers wouldn't have been possible without the support and dedication of all our host clubs,"

Eldridge said.

"As we enter into what we plan to be a full season of Mass Golf events, we remain committed to maintaining the level of care and attention put towards keeping our competitors, volunteers, host club personnel, and staff safe," said Jesse Menachem, Mass Golf Executive Director/CEO. "Statewide and nationally, golf was recognized as a safe recreational activity during times of great restriction and we are confident that we will keep this positive momentum surrounding the sport going into the 2021 season."

Online registrations for 2021 Mass Golf events will begin in early March. Additional details surrounding the new registration platform and the registration open dates will be provided in the coming weeks.

again, their season came to an end following a first-round road loss to Nipmuc Regional of Upton.

"We didn't have very many seniors on the team when I was a sophomore," Sedlacek said. "I had to step up and I wound up scoring about 50 goals. I just wanted to do everything that I could do to help my team win. It was very disappointing losing another playoff game."

Following the 2019 campaign, Patrick Nee decided to retire as the Belchertown boys' lacrosse coach.

"I thought coach Nee was a great coach and he's a great guy," Sedlacek said. "He got along great with every player on the team."

Two other Belchertown seniors will also be playing college lacrosse next year. Cole Irving will be playing lacrosse at the University of New England, which is in Biddeford, Maine. Griffin Weiss will be heading south to Danville, Kentucky where he'll be a member of the men's lacrosse team.

"I've been playing lacrosse with Cole since the second grade. He definitely has a high lacrosse IQ and he's an outstanding player," Sedlacek said. "Griffin hasn't been playing lacrosse for very long, but he's a hard worker. We're hoping to make a very good postseason run in our final season playing high school lacrosse."

The Orioles two main rivals in lacrosse are Granby and South Hadley.

"Granby is always a very big game for us," Sedlacek said. "South Hadley has a lot of very good players and they also have a lot of depth. It's a much different game whenever we face South Hadley on their turf field."

Sedlacek is planning to be the starting quarterback for the Orioles football team and he also plays defensive end on defense. The high school football season is scheduled to begin at the end of February.

"The good thing about the football season being right before the lacrosse season this year is that football helps you get in shape," he said. "I'm also the captain of the football."

SEDLACEK • from page 12

"Coach Randall did give me a tour of the campus," he said. "It's a beautiful place and I'm really looking forward to living away from home for the first time."

A couple of Sedlacek's other college choices were Roger Williams, Clarkson University, and Vassar College.

Owen first became interested in the sport of lacrosse after his grandmother gave him a lacrosse stick.

"My grandmother gave me a stick the year before I could start playing for a youth lacrosse team," Sedlacek said. "I started practicing with the stick and it was a lot of fun when I was finally able to join a team. I learned a lot about lacrosse from all of the coaches in the Belchertown Lacrosse Association."

His father, Robert, was one of the youth lacrosse coaches.

"I was coached by my dad and a few of my friend's dads," Sedlacek said. "They taught us the basic skills of the game and I advanced from there."

Owen is looking forward to having his mother (Carissa) and his father come watch him play college lacrosse.

"I'm really hoping my parents can come to as many of my college lacrosse games as they can," he said. "I'm thankful for everything they've done for me."

Sedlacek joined the varsity lacrosse team at Belchertown High School as a freshman. He scored 10 goals and had around 20 assists that season.

"There were a lot of very good lacrosse players on the varsity team when I was a freshman," he said. "I just wanted to help the seniors on the team score goals. It's just too bad that we couldn't make a run in the postseason that year."

After posting a 13-3 regular season record in 2018, the 10th-seeded Orioles lost at seventh-seeded Wahconah Regional, 15-5, in a first-round game of the Central/ West Division 3 tournament.

The Orioles were a much younger squad the following season, but they still managed to qualify for the postseason tournament with a 13-5 mark. Once

Indoor football team signs players

WORCESTER — The Massachusetts Pirates have signed offensive lineman Jared Thomas for the 2021 season.

Thomas (6'3", 300 lbs.) last played college football at Northwestern University. He appeared in 51 total games during his four years on the field, including starting all 14 games at center during his junior and senior seasons. Thomas redshirted as a true freshman at Northwestern in 2015.

Some of Thomas' accomplishments at Northwestern include being named 2019 team captain and 2019 All-Big Ten Honorable Mention.

The Pirates have also signed offensive lineman Dwayne

Wallace. Wallace last played in The Spring League in November 2020. He also played in XFL for the Los Angeles Wildcats in 2020.

Wallace has garnered professional football experience outside of the Pirates. After going undrafted in the 2019 NFL Draft, Wallace had brief stops in the NFL with the Pittsburgh Steelers and Chicago Bears. Wallace took part in rookie minicamps for both teams in May 2019.

Prior to his professional football career, Wallace played college football at three different schools. First, he enrolled at Riverside City College for his freshman and sophomore seasons. He then transferred to the University of California at

Berkeley for his junior year.

In his senior year, he transferred again, this time to the University of Kansas. That season, Wallace started 9 games at right guard. He also started a game at right tackle. Following his college football career, Wallace was a 2019 NFLPA Collegiate Bowl Participant. The Massachusetts Pirates are members of the Indoor Football League (IFL). The Pirates play all home games at the DCU Center located at 50 Foster St. Worcester, MA. 01608. For more information on the Massachusetts Pirates please call (508) 452-MASS (6277), email contact@masspiratesfootball.com or visit www.masspiratesfootball.com

Pioneers to host Pelham clinic

LUDLOW — Western United Pioneers FC is excited to offer a soccer clinic in Pelham, MA for players in the Massachusetts North Region. The clinic provides off-season training and skill development by WUP FC coaches. The second sessions available.

This program is offered to boys

and girls born in 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, and 2014. The four-week program includes one practice per week for a total of \$65 per session. Sessions will consist of a max of 15 players per field (COVID regulation for the players' safety).

SESSION 2: MONDAYS 2/22, 3/1, 3/8, and 3/15

Boys and Girls Born 2013 and 2014: Session is at 5 p.m.

Boys and Girls Born 2010, 2011, and 2012: Session is at 6 p.m.

The sessions will be held at Pelham Elementary School at 45 Amherst Road, Pelham, MA 01002.

RACING • from page 12

of \$3,000 goes to the overall winner. At least the top-10 drivers in the final standings will receive payouts.

Several big contingency and raffle awards have been posted, adding even more value to the program for racer. A Port City Chassis by Crazy Horse Racing will be raffled off at season's end. To qualify for the chassis raffle, drivers must register by the deadline and attempt to qualify for at least 10 point-counting events.

AR Bodies and Five Star Bodies are each awarding a \$500 product certificate. Drivers who finish in the overall top-10 and have declared they are running an AR or Five Star body will be eligible for these raffles.

Drivers who register by the early-entry deadline of March 1 will also be entered into a Hoosier Tire raffle. Two randomly chosen entrants each receive two free ACT Late Model tires from Hoosier. ACT will also honor the tire awards of the 2020 pre-pandemic raffle winners if they register for this year's Challenge Cup.

"This program is a huge step forward for weekly Late Model racing in New England," ACT managing partner Cris Michaud said. "The Challenge Cup was one of the things we were most excited about in 2020 before the pandemic. Now, with nearly twice as many tracks on board plus some

great contingency partners, it's going to be even bigger for teams and fans."

"Weekly racers are the backbone of the sport, and it's important to reward them for their efforts," Michaud went on. "We've come up with a program that does so and which we think will boost car counts and action throughout the region."

Four tracks from the original 2020 slate will return for the 2021 debut: Barre, VT's Thunder Road Speedbowl; North Woodstock, NH's White Mountain Motorsports Park; Connecticut's Thompson Speedway Motorsports Park; and Massachusetts' Seekonk Speedway.

Five other tracks have joined the Challenge Cup. Connecticut's New London-Waterford Speedbowl will be the second Connecticut track.

Furthermore, four tracks from the New Hampshire Short Track Racing Association (NHSTRA) have signed up: Monadnock Speedway, Lee USA Speedway, Hudson Speedway, and Claremont Speedway.

Any competitor at the four NHSTRA tracks must use the ACT Late Model rules option the organization has introduced for the 2021 season. In other words, cars need to be 100% ACT legal for drivers to earn Challenge Cup points.

All weekly Late Model features at participating tracks will

be eligible for the Challenge Cup. Registered drivers can earn Challenge Cup points at any of the nine tracks. For example, a Thunder Road Late Model regular can also earn points at White Mountain, and a Thompson Speedway regular can also earn points at New London-Waterford Speedbowl or Monadnock Speedway.

A driver's 10 best performances across all tracks count towards their NELMCC total. Points will be awarded based on finishing position, car count, and cars passed. The full system is available at www.acttour.com/NELMCC.

Participating tracks are responsible for reporting results to the ACT offices. ACT Late Model Tour events and "open events" at these tracks are not eligible for Challenge Cup points.

To register for the New England Late Model Challenge Cup, drivers must submit the entry form along with a \$100 registration fee by Monday, April 5. Entries postmarked by Monday, March 1 will be eligible for the Hoosier tire drawing. The entry form and point system outline are available at www.acttour.com/NELMCC and on participating track websites. For more information, contact the ACT offices at (802) 244-6963, media@acttour.com, or visit www.acttour.com. You can also get updates on Facebook and Twitter at @ACTTour.

MIAA • from page 12

playoffs will be a state tournament instead of a four-team sectional, followed by state semifinals. The state finals would still be scheduled to take place after Thanksgiving, and Thanksgiving holiday matchups could still be preserved.

One thing that would change are the consolation games that occurred among non-playoff teams. The consolation games were determined by a committee in the MIAA for Weeks 9 and 10 as a way to bridge the gap for teams between the eight-

week qualifying season and Thanksgiving.

Now, the MIAA is not planning to specifically come up with matchups, but one area athletic director, Agawam's David Stratton, said a local organization, like the PVIAC, could determine non-playoff games based on who is not involved in the tournament.

"If we did non-playoff games, it would have to be done on a local level," said Stratton.

Following the reconsideration vote, there was a motion for the nine-week season again, but it was defeated.

Now, the exact regular season

format will have to wait until a future meeting as the meeting concluded without a new vote on how many weeks the regular season will be.

In Western Massachusetts, teams will still be playing in competitive conferences, which usually consist of five to seven teams. Depending on whether the regular season will be eight or nine weeks, teams would have to pick up independent games against non-conference teams.

Football teams will have an opportunity to play again in the Fall 2 season, set for next month. However, there will be no playoffs for the Fall 2 season.

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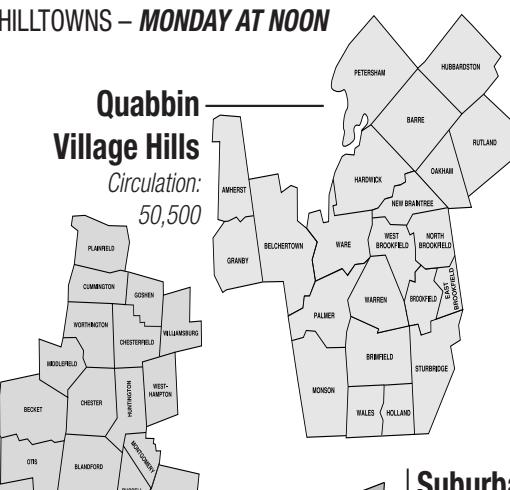
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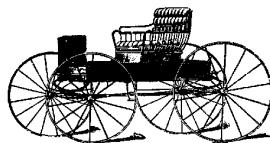
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Docket No. HS20P0579EA

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This is NOT a hearing date, but a deadline by which you must file a written appearance and objection if you object to this proceeding. If you fail to file a timely written appearance and objection followed by an affidavit of objections within thirty (30) days of the return day, action may be taken without further notice to you.

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Loomis Village resident who survived 1918 flu pandemic receives COVID-19 vaccine

STAFF REPORT

SOUTH HADLEY — Tom McAuley, a veteran and 103-year-old resident of Loomis Village, has made history by receiving his COVID-19 vaccine at the South Hadley continuing care retirement community.

McAuley was born in Boston during the flu pandemic of 1918. He later moved to Feeding Hills prior to becoming a resident of Loomis Village, where he continues to live independently.

McAuley served four years in the United States Air Force, and later became Vice President of Johnson & Johnson. He has two sons, one who lives locally and another in Arizona.

The Loomis Communities,

which consists of three campuses, Applewood in Amherst, Loomis Lakeside at Reeds Landing in Springfield and Loomis Village in South Hadley, began vaccinating their residents earlier in January, and will soon begin second doses of the vaccine. Clinics will continue every three weeks through February to ensure all residents and team members who want a vaccine can receive a vaccine.

The Loomis Communities is the longest serving, most experienced provider of senior living in the Pioneer Valley. As a not-for-profit organization, Loomis' mission is to enrich the lives of older adults on three campuses, Applewood in Amherst, Loomis Lakeside at Reeds Landing in Springfield and Loomis Village in South Hadley.



COURTESY PHOTO
Tom McAuley, a veteran and 103-year-old resident of Loomis Village, made history by receiving his COVID-19 vaccine at the South Hadley continuing care retirement community.

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DA • from page 11

fication methodology employed by the Office of Alcohol Testing between June 2011 and Sept. 2014 was deficient, resulting in scientifically unreliable BAC results. He further ruled that breathalyzer results would not be allowed back into evidence until OAT implemented reliable methods for calibrating and certifying the machines, which happened in 2019 when OAT obtained accreditation. Breathalyzer results have been used in court ever since.

Based on the results of the breathalyzer litigation, all criminal defendants who took the

breathalyzer between 2011 and 2018 and were subsequently convicted of OUI-alcohol will receive letters notifying them of their right to challenge their convictions. This includes defendants who went to trial and were found guilty; defendants who resolved their cases through guilty pleas; and defendant whose cases were "continued without a finding" and eventually dismissed after successfully completing a short period of probation. If an eligible defendant chooses to challenge their conviction, they may be entitled to a new trial, at which the Commonwealth would have to prove their guilt without relying

upon the breathalyzer result.

Between 2011 and 2018, there were approximately 3,100 OUI-alcohol prosecutions in Hampshire and Franklin Counties in which defendants took the breathalyzer and were later convicted or received a continuation without a finding. Statewide, there are an estimated 27,000 persons who may be eligible to challenge their convictions and will be receiving letters in the coming weeks. Each District Attorney's Office is responsible for mailing standard letters to all defendants convicted of OUI in their respective counties between 2011 and 2018.

BCC hosts trivia challenge

STAFF REPORT

BELCHERTOWN — The Belchertown Cultural Council will be hosting Challenge! Trivia with the Trivia Brothers on Tuesday, Feb. 16 at 5:30 p.m. on Zoom.

Join in for a fun evening of knowledge, guesses, laughs and music.

Teams can be comprised of individual or multiple players in a household.

Each team will use only one smart phone or tablet to enter the game and submit the answers. Teams will need two devices to enjoy the optimal experience - a computer, to join the Zoom meeting, and a smart phone or tablet, to play the game. For a sneak preview of the Trivia Brothers, visit www.triviabrothers.com.

BCC will bring the party right to your living room. Register for this unique trivia night that promises a fun evening for everyone. The BCC believes everyone who plays will feel like winners but yes, the team with the most points will receive a prize! Who wants to play? Register at www.belchertownculturalcouncil.com/trivia. Spots will be filled on a first come, first serve basis. The link and instructions will be sent out to teams through email by 12 p.m. on Feb. 16.

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